

The BLM manages approximately 18,500 acres Case Mountain, which supports the Giant Sequoia Complex and the Case Mountain Extensive Recreation Management Area. Non-mechanized public access offers miles of mountain biking, hiking and horseback riding trails, picnic tables, wildlife watching and photography in the foothills of the Sierras.



The area is also part of the 20,000-acre Kaweah Area of Critical Environmental Concern, designated for the protection of the six distinct Giant Sequoia groves, other sensitive plant and animal species, riverbank ecosystems and culturally significant areas.




Sequoias are redwood conifers that are the largest trees in the world. Fossil evidence show they once grew in China, Europe and North America, but today are only found in California and Oregon.

The BLM encourages public involvement during the development of environmental analyses to solicit feedback on the scope of analysis, planning issues and range of alternative management strategies. In an effort to engage the public, the Case Mountain Vegetation and Forest Health Plan Environmental Assessment and public comment period are posted on the BLM National NEPA Register.

[https://
eplanning.blm.gov/epl-
front-office/eplanning/
planAndProjectSite.do?
method=
Name=renderDefaultPlan
OrProjectSite&projectId=
94161](https://eplanning.blm.gov/epl-front-office/eplanning/planAndProjectSite.do?method=renderDefaultPlanOrProjectSite&projectId=94161)

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U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management

Case Mountain Vegetation and Forest Health Plan

Preserving the Giant Sequoia



Why a vegetation and forest health plan?

Vegetation management within the Case Mountain area is necessary to prevent catastrophic wildfires that could threaten both the Giant Sequoia groves and surrounding communities.

Many years of drought, very dense forests, and bark beetle attack have caused major tree death in California, especially along the western slopes of the southern Sierra Nevada. Decades of fire suppression and decreased vegetation management contribute to natural overgrowth, which threatens forest stands as competition and stress lead to die-off. When combined with drought, which weakens trees and makes them more susceptible to insect and pathogen attack, already stressed stands are at extreme risk for rapid mortality. Historical logging practices and livestock grazing have also played a role in poor forest stand health in the region. Clear-cutting has resulted in dense, even-aged stands of smaller trees and grazing has removed ground fuels that supported low-intensity understory fires.

Tree mortality and overly dense stands increase the risk of high heat and large flames at the canopy of trees during a wildland fire, which has catastrophic results on the landscape and within wildland-urban interfaces. This same high-intensity fire would threaten groves of Giant Sequoia managed by the Bakersfield Field Office, which are of high value to the public, the Bureau, and the larger ecological system of groves under the management of other public

agencies and private landowners. Without active vegetation management within the Case Mountain area, the public could incur loss of Giant Sequoia due to poor forest health and catastrophic fire, which could in turn threaten neighboring residences.

Under current management practices:



Desired management outcome:



Proposed management actions:

Biomass Extraction

The purpose of biomass extraction is to reduce hazardous fuels, reduce smoke emissions, and utilize the biomass to benefit the local economy and reduce the cost of treatments.



BLM proposes to use any feasible combination of ground-based and cable-based extraction to reduce fuel loads in Case Mountain.

Prescribed Fire

Prescribed fire can be an effective tool to achieve management objectives. In addition, prescribed fire would mimic the natural fire patterns in an ecosystem that evolved with fire as a natural disturbance.



BLM proposes to use a combination of hand piling and burning, and understory burning, under a written and approved plan, if feasible.